

Jan. 6, '77

Sarah's Questions

1. Do seeing and visible object arise at the same time, or do they shortly follow each other? Is visible object just colour? What about form?

Answer: Seeing sees visible object and thus at the moment of seeing there must be visible object as well. As to the moment of arising, visible object is rupa and thus it 'lasts' a bit longer than citta. Before the seeing there was the eye-door adverting consciousness and this adverted to visible object before the seeing could arise. Visible object has to arise before the seeing, and it also lasts longer than the moment of seeing. There are sampatti-chhana-citta which receives visible object, santirana-citta which investigates visible object, and the other cittas in that process, which experience that same visible object, but they are all different from seeing. Seeing only sees.

As regards sati, sati can be aware of any object, for example of visible object, or of seeing, or of attachment to the visible object. When we speak about awareness, we use the word appear, meaning: sati experiences this or that object. Sati experiences, seeing experiences, all cittas experience. Sati experiences visible object, but it experiences it in its own characteristic way, different from the way seeing experiences it. Sati does not see, but it is mindful of the characteristic of visible object. We do not count, how long afterwards sati arises, how can we count. When we are aware, there are characteristics which appear and we do not think of any process, because that is thinking.

It is not so that there is a certain order when visible object appears (to the sati) and when seeing, no order at all. It depends on sati what object it takes. It, not we, and how difficult it is not to choose just a little.

Visible object is what appears through the eyes. We can call it colour, but we do not mean to say that recognizing red or blue, or paying attention to different colours is seeing. Don't we usually ~~pay attention to~~ perspective, or contours of objects? →

← There were many associations, remembering, before there is the idea of this thing or that thing, and that is not seeing. We think we look at the chair, but what is seen? Many moments also that we do not look at this or that thing, but there is just experience of anything visible, a visible field that happens to contact eye-sense. On the tape it was said: you also see what is right or left of the 'thing' you think you see. How helpful this is. We do not actually see this or that object. We think we do and cling to it. There are many moments there is not thinking about this or that thing, or trying to define it, moments

of just seeing, very natural. We do not care about contours of a particular object, but anything which appears, no thoughts about it. Thus, now we understand better what seeing is not. And now the patience and the courage comes in. Maybe a hundred times, maybe a thousand or a million times of awareness, and then perhaps there is less doubt about: is this visible object, or is this seeing? But it is the way to learn the right object. We know that. So, nothing to do with form. We can use the word form, and it is used now and then in translations, but we should have right understanding of what visible object is.

Q. 2a. The cittas follow each other, but not all realities are cittas. How can cittas condition each other when there are other realities in between, like rūpas?

Answer: One citta falls away and is immediately succeeded by a following one, and thus there is a long chain of cittas, which is never interrupted, so long as we are in the cycle of birth and death. That is why tendencies we had in the past can come up today, since each citta which falls away conditions the following citta which has then all past experiences accumulated in it. We say loosely: cittas carry on accumulations, or pass them on, but this is not quite precise. As we discussed before, the citta now falls away but it conditions the next one, but cittas do not know one another, not one citta waits till the next arrives. But it is a fact that how we were in the past conditions our behaviour today, we can notice that. Still, not one moment can last. The way we were in the past conditions how we are now, although we are no longer the same. The same way: look at the photo of you as a baby, and now: not the same, but the past conditions how you are now.

When you say: there are other realities in between citta, you probably mean: now a citta is experienced, then a rūpa is experienced, or appears. Here we have again the word: arise and the word appear, like above. There are nāmas and rūpas arising and falling away all the time, independantly whether we experience them at this or that moment or not. Sometimes sati experiences one nāma or one rūpa, only one object at a time, but this does not mean that only what appears to the sati arises; many realities arise and fall away in the meantime, and now and then sati can be aware of one among the many realities. Sati 'lifts out' one, 'chooses' one, and quite unpredictable it seems what the sati takes. You never can tell. We would like to guide sati, we think we should know seeing, but then it is not the right sati.

Q. 2b. How can we say that all our past accumulations are accumulated in one citta, as one citta is only one reality?

Answer: There is only that one citta in the long link which is able to 'carry on' the accumulations. Citta is nāma, and we

find it difficult to imagine how nāma works, but it works, that is all we can see. We get to know ourselves better, also our accumulations. We know how we were in the recent past and how we are now. How what we did before influences us now. This is still reasoning. Later on we may have a deeper insight into all this, how citta works. Only through the development of sati.

Q. 3. Kamma can condition the other conditions, and causes other conditions to arise. Can we say, therefore that kamma indirectly is the cause of everything? Can we say that kamma is carried in the citta?

Answer: Kamma is cetanā, intention. Good intention motivates a good deed, bad intention motivates a bad deed. So many different intentions at different moments. Like all other mental qualities, also kamma is accumulated and carried on from citta to citta. Kamma conditions vipākacitta, which can be rebirth-consciousness or it takes the form of seeing, hearing and the other experiences through the senses. All these cittas are the mental result of kamma. Kamma also produces rūpas, but not all rūpas of our body. It produces the senses, also heart-base, life-faculty. Our bodily features are conditioned by kamma. But also citta now, and food and temperature condition some rūpas of the body.

Kamma is not the cause of everything. Kamma-condition is only one of the 24 conditions. Anger now is not caused by kamma-condition, it is ^(conditioned by) upanissaya condition, translated as decisive support condition. Our anger before is decisive support condition for anger now.

Thus, when talking about the 24 conditions we have to be very precise, and we do not use the word condition loosely. Kamma-condition is a very specific condition, it deals with the producing of vipākacittas and specific rūpas of the body. That aspect only. Realities can be considered under many different aspects. (Still your old question?) But it is not easy to see how all these conditions work. But our anger now, it is conditioned. Yes, but anger is not vipāka, thus we do not speak about kamma-condition; we speak about upanissaya condition. Even the weather and food are under upanissaya condition, Khun Sujin said on the tape. It is very wide. ~~~~~~~~~

← It is also so, that several conditions can work for one phenomenon.

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So far for your questions, which I like. More, please.

You wrote about doing what one likes without feeling guilty about it, like shopping, etc. Sometimes we think we should listen all day to the Dhamma, we feel we need reminders. We feel guilty

when being so absorbed in T.V., not a moment of sati, and I still feel guilty, have aversion at times. Other times we go shopping, enjoy ourselves, no sati, but we do not feel guilty. One extreme or the other, but when is there the Middle Way? I would like to add: doing what we like, shopping etc, but with sati, that is the Middle Way. If there is no sati, there is no Middle Way. So, it is hard to be on the Middle Way, we go to extremes all the time.

I was watching T.V. and was telling myself: how silly to waste all this time, writing Dhamma or reading is better. Then sati was for a moment aware, although ^(precise understanding) there is no ~~yet, I am~~ not sure yet about visible object or seeing, panna still on the intellectual level I would say, but there was seeing, not only watching T.V., and no need to go to the other room, to put sati off until later, after the T.V., ~~to~~ to put it off, it can arise, in the middle of watching, no forcing. Let it be a very vague awareness, everyone has his own tempo, it cannot be hurried. It cannot be forced. But things happen in our lives which remind us, death of relatives and friends, war, etc. Enough reminders in life if we let ourselves be reminded and also help our friends and remind them. Because sati is urgent, there is fire on our head, rebirth is dangerous. Sometimes we have fear and then we are reminded. Sati is urgent, but it must be natural, otherwise it is no sati. It is urgent to be aware when eating, when shopping, even for one short moment, one moment is better than none at all. So, at the same time we tell one another that we must do all we like, we also should remind one another not to let time go by and not be aware at all, while we walk to our work or to the shops, or to our friends. That can be fateful. Time goes too fast!